

Connecting Children to Nature: Schoolyard Habitat Celebration and Fishing Derby

Ribbon cutting ceremonies occurred at two schools in Waldorf, MD open up the Connecting Children to Nature: Schoolyard Habitat Celebration and Fishing Derby, April 16, 2008. This event honored the Charles County Government and Charles County Public Schools for their dedication to providing children with the opportunity to connect with nature at their schoolyards.



13,000 herbaceous wetland and upland plants were planted at Arthur Middleton Elementary School by more than 700 students and 16,000 wetland plants were planted at Dr. Gustavus Brown Elementary School by more than 700 students, creating two wetland habitats on their schoolyards.

Lyle Laverty, U.S. Department of Interior, Assistant Secretary - Fish, Wildlife and Parks spoke at the event recognizing the need to connect children with nature and applauding the innovative way that these schoolyard wetlands are already being used by teachers to help children explore and understand the natural community.

This event, held during National Environmental Education Week, demonstrates how schoolyard habitat projects can connect students with nature while providing habitat for local wildlife. Students participated in a fishing derby along with several other hands-on outdoor investigation activities including fish printing and a wildlife scavenger hunt.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Directorate listed Connecting People with Nature as one of the agency's six top conservation priorities. The Chesapeake Bay Field Office's Schoolyard Habitat Program achieves this goal. With local, state and non-profit partners, the Program helps students to plan, design and create wildlife habitat on school grounds. Throughout the Program's 15-year history in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, thousands of students have had the opportunity to experience their natural environments first hand.

